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## **US Labor Department's MSHA releases mid-year mine fatality update**

**ARLINGTON, Va.** – The U.S. Department of Labor's Mine Safety and Health Administration today released a mid-year summary of mining deaths across the country. During the first half of 2014, 22 miners were killed in accidents in the mining industry. The toll represents an increase in the mid-year fatality count and reverses a decline in fatal accidents seen in recent years.

In May, MSHA launched a number of efforts, including the use of training and enforcement tools, to counteract the spike in mining deaths, particularly in the metal and nonmetal sector. In the second quarter of the year alone, 14 miners died – five in coal mining and nine in metal and nonmetal mining.

“Mining fatalities are preventable, and they are a reminder that much more needs to be done to protect the nation’s miners,” said Joseph A. Main, assistant secretary of labor for mine safety and health. “These deaths should serve as a wake-up call for all of us to keep safety at the forefront at all times.”

Machinery and powered haulage accidents were the most common cause of mining deaths, at seven and five, respectively. Four of the miners killed were contractors, and five were supervisors. In the metal and nonmetal mining sector, 14 miners died in the first half of the year. Three were killed in powered haulage accidents, three in machinery accidents, two from falling/sliding material, two from falls, two from a fall of rib, one in a hoisting accident, and one from a gas explosion. Eight coal miners died: four in machinery accidents, two in powered haulage accidents, and two in a coal outburst.

Conducting workplace examinations prior to and during a shift can prevent accidents and injuries when health and safety hazards are found and fixed. Effective and appropriate training will ensure that miners recognize and understand hazards and how to control or eliminate them.

MSHA has undertaken a number of measures to prevent mining deaths, injuries and illnesses: increased surveillance and strategic enforcement through impact inspections at mines with troubling compliance histories; enhanced pattern of violations actions; special initiatives such as “Rules to Live By,” which focuses attention on the most common causes of mining deaths; and outreach efforts.

“We know it takes the efforts of all of us in MSHA and the mining industry to improve mine safety and health,” said Main.

For further information, go to <http://www.msha.gov/fatals/summaries/summaries.asp>.

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